

The '059 reference is an Abstract that refers to U.S. Pat. No. 4,522,965 ('965 reference). The '965 reference is enclosed in an accompanying IDS. The patent makes clear that a specific thermoplastic polymer is intended, which necessarily includes at least two ester components. ('965 at, e.g., col. 1, lines 45-58 and at claim 1). Thus the '059 and '965 references strongly teach away from the present invention.

The '060 reference purports to disclose "A self-adhesive moulding sealing material". Applicants traverse the Examiner's assertion that this is known to be identical with a pressure-sensitive adhesive. MPEP §2144.03.

The present invention concerns a selection of compositions containing a thermoplastic polymer having substantially *no epoxy-binding functions or ester functions*, a tackifier, and an epoxy component comprising a *cured epoxy*. The present specification teaches that this selection of thermoplastic polymers provides improved extrusion properties. (Specification at p. 3, lns. 16-27.) This improved property is relevant to formation of a non-woven web of blown microfibers. The '060 reference does not teach this selection.

The '060 reference teaches the use of numerous thermoplastics having epoxy-binding functions or ester functions, such as polyvinyl acetate and polyester thermoplastics in addition to ethylene/butadiene and polybutadiene rubbers. Thus the '060 reference teaches away from the selection of polymers having substantially no epoxy-binding functions or ester functions. The '060 reference nowhere teaches or suggests an adhesive adapted for use in forming a non-woven web of blown microfibers.

The '060 reference apparently teaches the addition of an uncured epoxy resin, noting that the addition of a curing agent is optional. In contrast, the present invention requires cured epoxy. Examples 1-3 demonstrate that the addition of a cured epoxy provided improved shear strength with some loss of peel strength; however, the use of a cured epoxy reduced the loss of peel strength.

Claims 3-6, 11-13 and 17-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over either of '059 or '060 taken in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,789,699 (Kiefer). Applicants respectfully traverse.

As noted above, the '059 and '060 references strongly and explicitly teach away from the present invention. Nor is there any motivation in any of Kiefer or the '059 or '060 references to combine their teachings in the manner of this rejection. As noted above, the present invention provides a selection of adhesive compositions that is more amenable to use in a blown microfiber web due to improved extrusion properties.

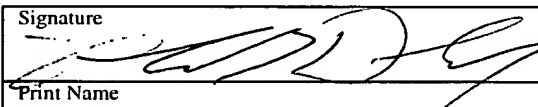
Applicants draw the Examiner's attention more specifically to Example 4 of the present invention (Specification at pp. 23-24). This Example provides a side-by-side comparison of blown microfiber webs with and without the addition of a cured epoxy component. As previously noted, Kiefer does not teach the inclusion of a cured epoxy component, or any epoxy component. Example 4 demonstrates that the web made according to the present invention demonstrated improved surface area coverage, peel, shear and porosity characteristics. Unlike the comparative web, the web according to the present invention retained porosity after pressing at 180 °C. (Specification at p. 24, lns. 16-25).

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants request withdrawal of the present rejections and allowance of the pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

Registration Number	Telephone Number
36,115	651-737-4029
Date	
January 26, 2001	

3M Office of Intellectual Property Counsel  
P.O. Box 33427  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55133-3427

Signature

Print Name
Philip Y. Dahl